

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of February 2, 2025

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.

LEADER NOTES

MEETING NOTES

⇒ LEADER TIP

Your goal each night is to lead your group in such a way that you hear from everyone and use the Bible as your guide. Know that if you do this each week the people in your group will grow! Remember you don't need to cover all questions. Great conversation is far more important than covering all the questions.

⇒ PRAYER NOTE

Check out the Tips on Group Prayer at the end of this Leader's Guide. And NEVER make someone pray. Group prayer is similar to public speaking, which is the #1 fear people have. More than once we've had people tell us they quit Life Groups because a well-intentioned person required everyone to pray.

⇒ ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online through the Planning Center Groups. If you are still having trouble with taking attendance online, please read this article:

<https://pcogroups.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360016180273-take-attendance>.

Find all of our leader resources online: <https://www.springfieldfaithcenter.org/leader-resources>

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

February 9th, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM at SFC

Join us as we review the previous year's financial status, talk about our main accomplishments, and ratify our new council members. Afterwards, join us for some light refreshments! Childcare will be provided.

⇒ NEWCOMER'S GATHERING

February 9th, in the Green Room after each service

Are you new to Springfield Faith Center, or just want to take the first step in getting connected? This is the place to start! Our Newcomer's Gathering is a brief meet and greet designed to help those who are just starting out at SFC to get connected. Join us to meet some of our pastors and staff, enjoy some light refreshments, and discover your next steps. **This will follow both services in the Green Room.**

DISCUSSION REMINDER: Remember, every night you want to hear from everyone in your group.

Think through how you're going to ask questions so this happens. Ask various individuals what they think, go around the circle, set time limits on answers so you have time to hear from everyone.

WEEKEND NOTES

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of February 2, 2025

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

BE FRIENDLY

1. If you could instantly master any ordinary skill (like baking the perfect cookie, fixing a leaky faucet, or remembering everyone's name), what would it be and why?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Keep people focused on "ordinary" skills; avoid super powers and other extreme ideas. Those are fun ways to answer, but I want to keep coming back to the ordinary nature of the people involved in the scripture reading this week.

2. In this passage, Peter visits two different people—Aeneas and Dorcas. What do you notice about their situations and the way they are described? What details stand out to you, or what seems most meaningful?

Low Risk. Good to have everyone answer this one.

Leader Tip: Some groups may not have much to say in answering this question, and that's ok. We're not given many details about either Aeneas or Dorcas, and some folks may not feel there's much to say; other groups may end up highlighting a number of things. Probe this a bit, but don't feel much pressure to linger here if people are drawing blanks.

BE OPEN

3. Aeneas had been paralyzed for eight years, and Dorcas had passed away; both seemed like hopeless situations, but Jesus does wonders in that hopelessness. What do these stories teach us about the nature of hope? Do these stories make you think about your own interaction with hope, and how it plays out in your relationship with God?

Medium Risk. Some may not be comfortable to share in a larger setting.

Leader Tip: This is the sort of question that will pretty naturally transition into personal stories, but keep in mind that those stories can be joyful or painful (or both!). Be sure to keep people safe if they are willing to share something painful. Hope is often the thing that keeps us going, but hope deferred (or seemingly denied) can make the heart sick.

4. After Dorcas was raised from the dead, we're told that the story became known all over Joppa and that many believed in the Lord. Faith plays a role in initiating this story, but it also grows from what we read here. How

do you define faith, and how do you see that being demonstrated in these events?

Medium Risk. Some may not be comfortable to share in a larger setting.

Leader Tip: Feel free to take some time answering the question about how people define faith; that's one that's worth discussing at length. Also, be aware that people will have strong feelings about it, and they may even disagree with each other. That's completely fine, but it will be up to you to help make sure that your group handles this well. Watch for strong personalities/opinions that seem to be shutting other people down in the conversation, and be sure to keep everyone connected to the conversation.

5. Pastor Brandon talked about the element of mystery in relation to God's will, and in understanding why he does certain things. Quietly, to yourself, or out loud, as a group, read the following scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 11:5 (NLT)

⁵Just as you cannot understand the path of the wind or the mystery of a tiny baby growing in its mother's womb, so you cannot understand the activity of God, who does all things.

Job 42:1-3 (NLT)

¹Then Job replied to the LORD: ²"I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. ³You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NLT)

¹²Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

The mystery, or the unknowability, of God's will can be hard for us at times. It can make God seem hard to trust, or can even make him seem unkind. Do these verses, and the many like them, make it easy for you to trust God, or do they make it harder?

How do you handle the knowledge that God doesn't always do the things that we think would be good for him to do?

Medium Risk. Some may not be comfortable to share in a larger setting.

Leader Tip: Don't be afraid to have someone read the verses out loud, possibly several times. Not everyone is comfortable reading scripture for themselves. This can be a chance for them to practice reading/hearing the Word, and trying to find meaning in it.

Be aware that these questions can also open the doors on some pretty painful memories. This is another good time for you to maybe share a story about yourself first, to set the stage for vulnerability and trust. The mystery of God is something that should lead us to seeing his glory, but the enemy often tries to leverage it in the opposite direction. Be sensitive to people, and know that some folks will have a lot of hurt regarding past experiences that didn't go the way they hoped they would.

BE VULNERABLE

6. Dorcas wasn't a famous or powerful persona, but her life had a profound impact on her community, and her passing was marked by tremendous

grief. Who are some “ordinary” people who have made a big impact on your faith? What does their example tell you about God’s care for “ordinary” people?

High Risk. A few people may want to answer this question.

Leader Tip: This question also invites vulnerability and personal story-telling, but of a less painful sort. Usually, these stories are good ones, and people will talk about the ordinary folks that played a positive role in their lives.

Feel free to linger on this question, since hearing others talk may inspire memories in the rest of the group as they listen.

7. If God worked through Aeneas and Dorcas, He can work through us too. What’s one way you want to be more available for God to use you this week, even in ordinary ways? How can your Life Group support you in that?

High Risk. A few people may want to answer this question.

Leader Tip: This question still requires some vulnerability, but I suspect it will be easier for most folks to answer. Don’t be afraid to draw out a bit more conversation on this one, especially when you talk about how you can support each other. Encourage phone calls, and other forms of following up with one another. Ideally, people will remember what is said, and ask about it in the future (i.e. “Last week you said that God wanted to use you at the grocery store, to pray for people. How did that go? Did he do anything amazing?”)

PRAYER REQUESTS

(Commit to pray for at least 3 prayer requests from your Life Group)



TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in Life Group. Over the years we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.



HERE AND THERE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 9:32-43

Peter in Lydda:

Acts 9:32-35, Luke 5:17-26, Mark 2:1-12

- The resurrected Jesus is working through Peter to **heal** the sick.

Peter in Joppa:

Acts 9:36-43, Luke 8:40-56, Mark 5:21-43

- The resurrected Jesus is working through Peter to **raise** the dead.

Lessons:

1. About Miracles...

- Miracles are signs of **hope** that bring people to **faith**.
- Miracles are full of **mystery**.

2. The way Jesus worked **back then** is the way Jesus works **today**.

3. **Ordinary** people are **extraordinary** to God.